



MARK B HORTON, MD, MSPH
Director

State of California—Health and Human Services Agency
California Department of Public Health



ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER
Governor

GUIDELINES FOR SUBMITTING SPECIMENS FOR INFLUENZA 2010-2011

CRITERIA FOR SUBMITTING SPECIMENS:

Patients with influenza-like illnesses (temperature $\geq 100^{\circ}\text{F}$ or 37.8°C orally, AND cough and/or sore throat), especially those:

- with severe disease
- with recent overseas travel
- who have received this year's influenza vaccine

COLLECTING SPECIMENS FROM PATIENTS WITH SUSPECTED INFLUENZA:

- **Please use the sterile swabs provided.** Only collect one nasal swab and one throat swab from each patient and place into one tube of viral transport medium (VTM). Break off sticks, only leaving swabs in the VTM. **Screw caps on tightly.** After inoculation, the tube **MUST BE REFRIGERATED at 4°C !**
- Label each tube with the following: **patient's name, physician's name, date collected, and type of specimen** (under "Comments").
- Complete a Viral and Rickettsial Disease Specimen Submittal Form (enclosed) for each tube.
- For shipping: Set the VTM tube with swabs in the plastic biohazard bag (STP-701) and the secondary envelope (STP-700) provided. Then place it in the plastic zip-lock bag with the specimen form and put in the Styrofoam icebox with the two frozen ice packs.
- Call courier (Golden State Overnight) **1-800-322-5555** for specimen pick-up ("remote pickup"). Use account # **27592**; our shipping address is on the air bill with the kit.
- Specimens can be shipped Monday through Wednesday.
- Specimens can be stored at 4°C for up to five days. Please do not collect specimens if the hold time will exceed five days.
- Do NOT ship specimens on Thursday or Fridays; for specimens collected late Wednesday, Thursday or Friday, please store at 4°C and arrange for pick up on Monday (or Tuesday if over a holiday weekend). *However, please do not collect specimens if the hold time will exceed five days.*
- Freezing may decrease viability of the specimen, and is not recommended unless a -70°C deep freezer is available.

Note: VTM can be stored at room temperature PRIOR to inoculation. Please place cool packs in freezer until ready to use. Replacement kits will be sent to you for each specimen we receive.

If you have any questions concerning submission of specimens, contact Katharine King at 510-307-8562 or katharine.king@cdph.ca.gov.